

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 19, 2020

Mr. Robert S. Adler  
Acting Chairman  
Consumer Product Safety Commission  
4330 East West Highway  
Bethesda, MD 20814

Dear Acting Chairman Adler:

We write to express our serious concern regarding recent reports that incidents of child drowning have increased during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and to request information as to what measures the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is taking to ensure children are safe during this public health crisis.

Before the pandemic, drowning was the leading cause of death for children ages 1-4 and the second leading cause of death for children ages 5-9,<sup>1</sup> and most child drownings take place at home during the summer months.<sup>2</sup> This year, as many camps and community pools are closed, schools have moved summer classes online, and many parents are stretched thin trying to supervise their children while working full time, the American Academy of Pediatrics has warned that children may be at a heightened risk of drowning due to increased access to private pools and other sources of water.<sup>3</sup> Both Florida and Texas — the states with the most child drownings in pools and spas — have already seen higher numbers than last year.<sup>4</sup> As it remains unclear when effective treatment or a vaccine will be widely available, keeping children safe while they remain at home during this public health crisis is critical.<sup>5</sup>

The CPSC plays a vital role in ensuring the safety of our children—and that includes educating families about pool and spa safety.<sup>6</sup> The loss of one child due to drowning is too many, and it is for that reason that we believe that additional measures must be taken to keep children safe during the current pandemic. We urge the CPSC to take action and work to distribute information to families regarding how to prevent child drownings. We also respectfully request that you respond to the following questions:

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019, February 6). *Drowning Prevention*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/safekid/drowning/index.html>; Lewis, Lisa L. (2020, May 22). *Children May Be at a Higher Risk of Drowning This Summer*. The New York Times. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/parenting/drowning-water-safety.html>

<sup>2</sup> Consumer Product Safety Commission. (2020, June 3). *New CPSC Report Finds Steady Rise in Fatal Child Drownings*. Retrieved from <https://www.cpsc.gov/Newsroom/News-Releases/2020/New-CPSC-Report-Finds-Steady-Rise-in-Fatal-Child-Drownings>

<sup>3</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics. (2020, May 19) Retrieved from [https://digitalmedia.vnr1.com/2020/02/06/aap\\_drowningprevention\\_2020-05-01/](https://digitalmedia.vnr1.com/2020/02/06/aap_drowningprevention_2020-05-01/)

<sup>4</sup> Lewis, Lisa L. (2020, May 22). *Children May Be at a Higher Risk of Drowning This Summer*. The New York Times. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/parenting/drowning-water-safety.html>

<sup>5</sup> Fauci, Anthony. (2020, May 12). *Hearing on “COVID-19: Safely Getting Back to Work and Back to School”*. U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education Labor & Pensions. <https://www.help.senate.gov/hearings/covid-19-safely-getting-back-to-work-and-back-to-school>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.poolsafely.gov/>

1. What is the CPSC currently doing to prevent child drownings and help educate families on pool and spa safety during the coronavirus pandemic?
2. What data has the CPSC collected on the number of child drowning fatalities since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic?
3. What additional resources and authorities does the CPSC need to support its work to prevent child drownings?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



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Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



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Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator